

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME A PUBLIC GUARDIAN?

To become a public guardian you must complete the following:

- ✓ Become a Certified Professional Guardian:
 - Complete online application
 - Pay an application fee
 - Complete Mandatory Initial Certification Training
 - Clear an FBI Criminal Background Check
- ✓ Participate in an Interview Process
- ✓ Once certified, annually you must complete:
 - 12 hours of approved continuing education
 - Recertification

WHAT ENTITY CERTIFIES GUARDIANS?

The Certified Professional Guardian Board regulates the certification of professional guardians. Any court-appointed guardian who charges fees in three or more guardianship cases must be a professional guardian (RCW 11.88.088). The Board does not regulate the conduct of non-professional guardians, trustees, attorneys in fact, guardians ad litem or other fiduciaries. Public guardians are also regulated by the Office of Public Guardianship.

WHAT ROLE DOES THE COURT PLAY?

Under Washington law, the superior court of each county appoints and supervises all guardians, professionals and non-professionals.



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Washington State Office of Public Guardianship

Office of Public Guardianship

Mission

To promote the availability of guardianship services for individuals who need them and for whom the services may not otherwise be available.

A guardian is a surrogate decision-maker, appointed by the court to make either personal and/or financial decisions for a minor or adult, who the court has determined has a significant risk of personal and/or financial harm based on a demonstrated inability to adequately provide for his/her nutrition, health, and physical safety or to manage their financial affairs and/or personal property.

Program Overview

The program stems from action taken during the 2007 legislative session, with the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 5320. This bill established the Office of Public Guardianship (OPG) within the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The legislature appropriated funds for FY 08-09 to establish the OPG, to develop and implement pilot programs in a minimum of two areas, one urban and one rural.

PILOT PROGRAMS

Clallam, Grays Harbor, King, Okanogan, Pierce and Spokane Counties are the first counties to provide public guardianship services to improve the quality of life of low income, incapacitated persons in Washington.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Public guardians may serve as guardian of the person and



the estate for individuals satisfying the following eligibility criteria, who have been determined by the superior court to be incapacitated:

Must be age 18 years or older, and

Income does not exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level. *For 2009, income cannot exceed \$21,660.00 annually or \$1,805.00 monthly; this number may change from calendar year to calendar year and eligibility would change accordingly, or*

Is receiving long-term care services through the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, and

There is no one else qualified, willing and able to serve.

PRIORITIES

Incapacitated individuals from the following vulnerable populations are priorities for service delivery:

- Indigent/Homeless.
- At significant risk of harm from abuse, exploitation, abandonment, neglect, or self-neglect.
- In imminent danger of loss or significant reduction in public services that are necessary to live successfully in the most integrated and least restrictive environment that is appropriate for a specific individual.

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